Aega angustata Whitelegge, 1901 (ISOPODA : AEGIDAE), A NEW RECORD FOR NEW ZEALAND WATERS

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Abstract. The isopod *Aega angustata* Whitelegge is recorded for the first time in New Zealand waters from two male specimens collected as exoparasites of the grey-spiny dogfish *Squalus blainvillei*. Additional details on the morphology of their mouthparts is provided from dissected appendages.

As part of a programme to obtain information on the parasite/host relationship of isopod crustaceans, an examination of mixed fish catches was made during an outer Hauraki Gulf trawl series aboard the *RV. Ikatere*. Two specimens, later identified as *Aega angustata* Whitelegge were located simultaneously on a single specimen of the grey-spiny dogfish *Squalus blainvillei*. These isopods occupied almost adjacent sites of attachment on the lateral skin surface immediately behind the pectoral fin. Host tissue damage was not apparent after their removal.

Family AEGIDAE

Aega angustata Whitelegge, 1901

1901. *Aega angustata* Whitelegge, Mem. Aust. Mus. 4(3): 201-246. 1925 Hale, Trans. R. Soc. S. Aust. 49: 128-185.

Material examined includes two male specimens (Fig. 1) of total lengths 16.0 mm and 19.0 mm, both having well developed appendix masculina on second pleopods. Flagella of first antenna have five segments, those of second antenna have respectively eight segments (smaller specimen), and nine segments (larger specimen); possibly a reflection of body size (cf. Hale 1925, records a specimen of 24 mm total length having eleven segments in the flagella). Maxilliped (Fig. 2) has a helical alignment and is terminated by five stout hooks. Maxilla 2 (Fig. 3) narrows distally, with a terminal cluster of weaker hooks, and its inner basal surface is somewhat roughened by minute hair-like projections. Maxilla 1 (Fig. 4) is slender throughout its length, with hooks arranged almost in series towards the distal tip. Mandible (Fig. 5) is spirally orientated along its axis, with glove-like terminal segments. Mandibular palp has three segments, segment 3 bordered with hairs.

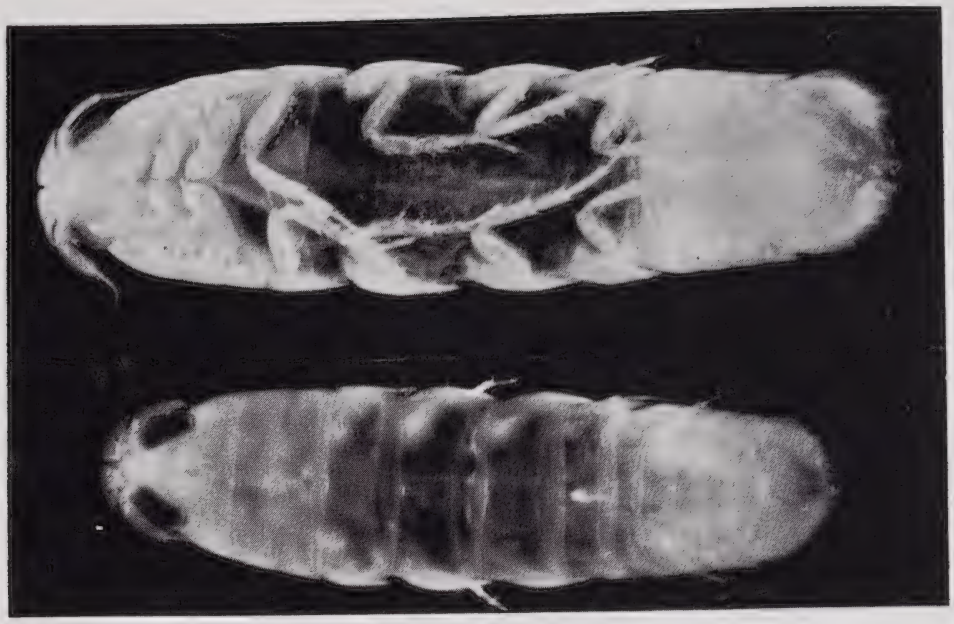

Fig. 1. *Aega angustata*. Two male specimens from the Hauraki Gulf. Upper, ventral view, length 19.0 mm. Lower, dorsal view, length 16.0 mm.

Body profile and shapes of all the appendages largely agree with the description given by Whitelegge (1901). A furrowed or ridged effect over coxal plates is barely discernible, but shape and extent of plates are as otherwise outlined by Hale (1925). Third peraepods, characteristically, have an inferior distal projection of the propodus, which parallels the dactylus, giving a claw-like appearance. Telson and uropods are strongly serrate, spinose and ciliate. Exopod and endopod bear seven marginal spines in each specimen. Spines on the telson are variable in number, thirteen (6.1.6) in the smaller specimen and fifteen (7.1.7) in the larger. In both specimens the central (apical) spine is largest and trifid in shape. When collected the overall body coloration of each specimen was conspicuous, the larger a bright orange-brown, the smaller a paler brown-buff.

Although *Aega angustata* has been previously known only in temperate Australian seas there is nothing unusual about its occurrence in New Zealand waters, and it can be included with a number of isopod species already known to share a common Australasian distribution. However, the lack of records in the literature concerning this species is somewhat surprising. It is distinctively coloured, has easily identifiable taxonomic characters, and there are an abundance of small bottom-feeding elasmobranchs available as potential hosts. To conclude that it is a sparcely distributed species would, nevertheless, seem inappropriate since its existence and efficiency as an ectoparasite would be prejudiced by low fecundity and dispersal.

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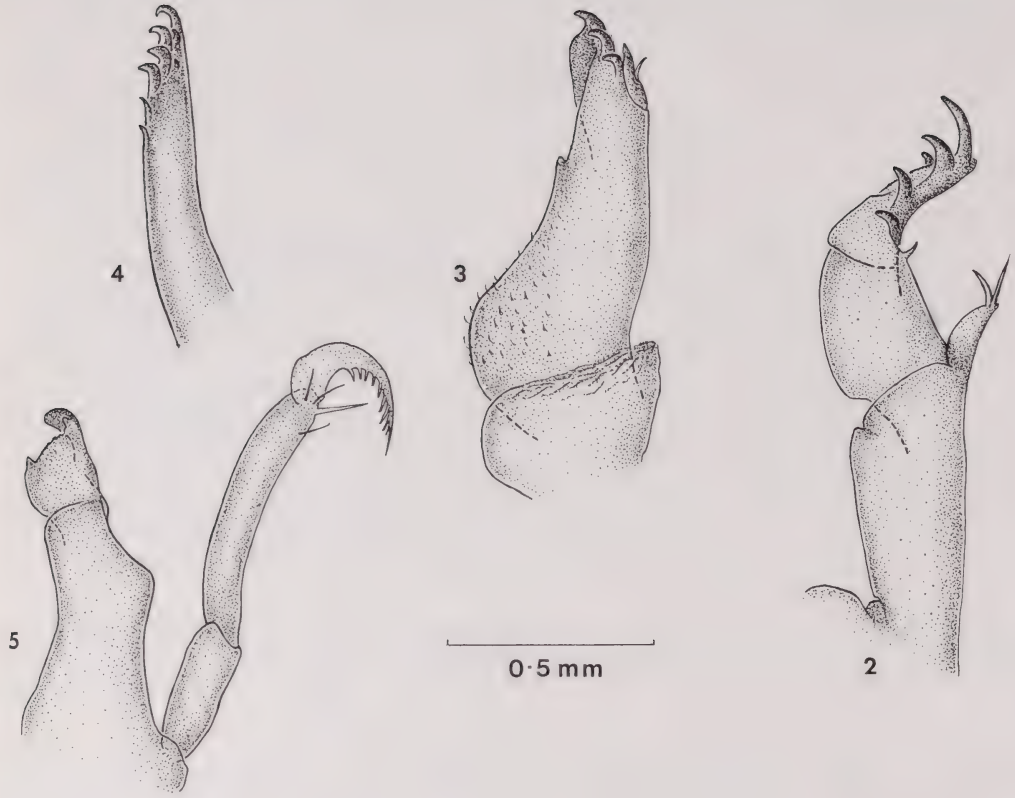

Figs. 2-5. *Aega angustata*. Mouthparts. 2. Maxilliped. 3. Maxilla 2. 4. Maxilla 1. 5. Mandible.

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